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that were held together by these useful little contrivances,—small pieces of metal with shining brass caps, backed by flexible flanges to hold the caps in place. These were inserted in the buttonholes of my shirt in most satisfactory fashion, and in a few moments as far as externals were concerned I presented as goodly an appearance as any man rejoicing in the effulgent glory of three lustreously golden studs.

With a sigh of relief I then turned to put on my white waistcoat: only to discover, alas! that that too was missing, nor was there any sign anywhere of any other kind of vest that could do duty convincingly, or even acceptably, with a claw-hammer coat. Again I flew precipitately down the stairs, this time to the kindly room clerk in the hotel office. I explained my predicament to him in a few well chosen words, ending up with:

"Haven't you a white vest you can lend me?"

"Certainly I have," said he, and together we repaired to his room in quest of the needed garment. He soon found it, and I returned rejoicing to my room, the treasure hugged tightly to my breast; but when I came to try it on I discovered, what I had overlooked in the agitation of the moment, that as eight is to thirty-two, so was the room clerk's façade to mine! I could get into the vest; but no compressor ever yet invented could so adjust my physical proportions to the garment that it would come within four inches of meeting in front.

"What the deuce am I going to do?" I cried, sinking into a chair in despair.

"Slit up the back, and I'll pin it on you," suggested the ever-ready Muse.

"But it isn't mine," said I.

"Buy it," said she.

In an instant I had the room clerk on the telephone. "Will you sell me that vest?" I asked.

"Why—no," he said. "I don't want to sell it."

"But I need it in my business," I pleaded.

"Well, you've got it, haven't you?"

"Yes, I've got it all right," I replied; "but I can't get into it without putting a yard of extra width in the back. Come on—be a good fellow and sell it to me," I added with all the pathos that I could summon.

"No," he answered with a chuckle, "no—I couldn't sell it to you; but I'll give it to you with all the pleasure in the world!"

In this fashion was the emergency met, and I went out before my audience that night on time in improvised raiment pinned on to my person, "a thing of shreds and patches," and blazoning as to my shirtfront with all the resplendent gilt of three brass tacks, all of which brought vividly to my mind the words of Antonio, in "The Merchant of Venice":

O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

It may seem to the casual observer that such matters as shirt studs and white waistcoats are of too slight importance to worry a speaker; but a "whole date" was once saved to me by the fact that I wore a high silk hat, which caused a kindly livery-stable keeper to drive me eighteen miles from a stranded railway train through a blizzard to the town of my destination, because he judged from my hat that I was a member of a favorite minstrel troupe that was to perform there the same night. When he discovered that I was only one of "them lecture fellers," for whose free tickets he had no use, he was terribly disappointed.

Anyhow, an audience likes a man to be wholly himself, and cares little for a speaker who modifies his dress according to his ideas of how they wish him to look. A popular and prominent candidate for Governor of New York once lost a large number of votes that might have elected him because in addressing a gathering of workmen at an East Side rally, the night being insufferably hot, he took off his coat and collar, and spoke to them in his shirt sleeves. The men were deeply offended. They significantly asked if he would have taken off his coat in the presence of a fashionable uptown audience, and would have none of his presumed assumption that they were any less worthy of his respect, or careful of their own dignity, than his so-called smarter, better-class people.

I have always found the full evening dress and high collar of an effete civilization wholly comfortable, and wear them accordingly wherever I lecture, whether it be in the rarefied social atmosphere of high academic circles, or in a mining camp where there dwell possibly rougher, but none the less genuine, human folk. I think that in the latter environment indeed it is a positive aid to success to do so; for there can be no doubt that reduced to its essentials the evening dress of the modern male creature is really a funny thing, and in an evening devoted somewhat to humor any element that is in even the least degree mirth-provoking does not come amiss.

Perhaps the most overpowering sense of being confronted by an emergency came to me again back in 1898 out of an experience that turned out to be critical only in my own imaginings. Most of our troubles are, I fancy, imaginary,—purely psychological, as the modern phrase has it,—but while they are on they are none the less acute for all that. On the occasion of which I write, at a more than feverish moment in our relations with Spain and Cuba, I was summoned to lecture at the attractive little port of Brunswick, Georgia. It was here, by the way, that I first had the pleasure of seeing my name on a hotel bill of fare, which in the platform world is the height of fame, just as in the theatrical world it is the acme of distinction for a star to see his name pasted on an ash barrel, or spread across the hoardings of a ten-acre lot full of tin cans and other undesirable bric-à-brac. They had me down on the supper bill among the hot breads, somewhat like this:

HOT BREAD.
Tea Biscuit. Corn Muffins. Graham Gems. Popovers.
John Kendrick Bangs, Casino, Tonight.

BUT that was not the Emergent Moment of which I would speak. This came later, at the conclusion of my lecture, when a young man who in the dim light of the street was scarcely perceptible, intercepted me as I left the hall.

"Mr. Bangs," said he, "I have come here from Captain Maguffy of the Samuel J.

Taylor, to present his compliments to the Skipper of the House Boat on the Styx. The Captain was detained from your lecture tonight, to his very great regret; but he wishes you would drop all formality and join him at supper."

Knowing neither Captain Maguffy (the name is a substitute for the real one) nor his ambassador, I thanked the latter, saying that while I was grateful for his courtesy I was really very tired, had much work ahead of me, and begged to be excused.

"The Captain never takes no for an answer," persisted the young man. "He will be terribly disappointed if you don't come, and as a matter of fact, counting surely upon your good fellowship, he has made special preparations for you."

Unfortunately—or fortunately, as it later turned out—among other serious defects in my education I had never been taught the firmer uses of the negative. I have never been able to say no to anybody as if I really meant it, and it has involved me more in difficulties than I care to record here or elsewhere. In any event, my regrets growing fainter and fainter, and Captain Maguffy's ambassador's insistence more and more marked, the sum total of some thirty-two negatives soon developed into one positive affirmative.

"All right," I said finally, "I'll run in on the Captain; but only for a moment, just long enough to shake hands, say howdido, and get back to bed. I must be in bed by midnight as a matter of principle."

The ambassador thereupon assisted me into one of those indescribable one-horse shays that seem to sprout in the vicinity of Southern railway stations and hotels about as lushly as mint in the patches of the Carolinas. I used to think when I was a resident of Yonkers that the Hudson River Valley was a sort of hack heaven, whither all sorts of deceased vehicles went when they died; but several tours of the South since have convinced me that that idea was mere presumption on my part. The South, as well as the Hudson River Valley, fairly burgeons with vehicular antiques that would delight the soul of an archeologist anxious to find the connecting link between the carriages of the Caesars and those of Andrew Jackson and his successors up to the merry days of Hayes.

The particular rattlety-bang old combination of wabbling wheels and hair-erupting cushions into which I was ushered was drawn by a white horse, and driven by a colored man. The horse was so very white that it could hardly be seen on the white coquina roads, and the negro was so black that he was equally imperceptible against the background of the night; so that I seemed to be floating through the night enjoying sensations similar to those of a man on his first journey in an aeroplane. The whole effect was cery in the extreme, especially as we drove and drove and drove, and floated and floated and floated, without apparently getting anywhere.

Then, of a sudden, I became terribly un-

